

From the Spring 2002 Newsletter
ETHICS ROUNDS

September 11

by Ellen Fox, MD

This is a painful and challenging time. Recent events have forced us to reexamine some of our most fundamental values. As we struggle to make sense of this changing world, many of us have been motivated to focus more on what is truly important and meaningful in our lives.

We can find solace in many ways. Just as death and destruction can lead to reexamination and renewal, hatred and violence can inspire love and compassion. Already, heartache and despair seem to be giving way to hope, healing, and celebration of the human spirit.

How September 11 and all that has followed will change America is ultimately up to us. My hope is that, as Americans, as public servants, and as health care professionals, we will remain true to the values we hold most dear. In the words of Anne Frank:

In spite of everything, I still believe
that people are really good at heart
I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation
consisting of confusion, misery, and death.
I can feel the suffering of millions, and yet,
if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come out right,
that this cruelty will end,
and that peace and tranquility will return again.
In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals,
for perhaps the time will come
when I shall be able to carry them out.

We invite you to join in a conversation about our fundamental values by participating in our "September 11" WebBoard discussion group. If you have VA Intranet access go to: <http://vawww.webboard.med.va.gov:8040/~ethics/login>. If you need more information or help, please visit the links below to view many useful resources.

www.ama-assn.org

American Medical Association: Dealing With Disaster - resources for patients and physicians coping with the aftermath of the terrorist attacks

www.nursingworld.org/news/courage.htm

American Nurses' Association: testimonials, How to Help, Opportunities to Volunteer

www.psych.org

American Psychiatric Association: Coping With A National Tragedy - resources, tools and other links

www.ncptsd.org

National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Disaster Mental Health - Dealing With The Aftereffects of Terrorism

www.whitehouse.gov

White House: America Responds to Terrorism - news, information on how you can help

www.bt.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/cad.htm

American Academy of Pediatrics: Children and Disasters - information from AAP and related resources

www.hhs.gov

Department of Health and Human Services: HHS Responds - Helping America Heal

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Institute of Mental Health: Response to Terrorist Acts Against America